

Appln. No.: 09/689,017  
Amdt. Dated February 3, 2004  
Reply to Office Action dated December 22, 2003

### Remarks/Arguments

Claims 1-15 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moore (U.S. Patent No. 5,917,925) in view of Baker, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,862,243).

Moore discloses the following in column 12, lines 5-19:

"From this point forward, marked mailpieces can be identified and verified through the use of the field reader system 18. Typically, a plurality of field readers cooperate with a single host computer 14 and with the control computer 12, and are at locations remote from the host and control computers. It should be understood that the mailpieces can be marked directly, or that one or more fixtures can be marked and affixed permanently to the mailpieces. The mailpiece items are identified and verified by using a light of appropriate wavelength to illuminate the symbol on the items. The illuminated symbol is captured by the camera 29. The captured image is then transferred to the portable PC 22 where the data is enhanced (if necessary), compressed, and transmitted via a modem 26, cellular link, or satellite communication to the host computer 14."

Moore discloses the following in column 23, lines 32-42:

"After the mailpiece package module has received its indicia marking from the marker, the module is scanned by a reader to confirm a valid marking. A camera is positioned to verify that a readable print has been made and that the information conveying positions of the symbols are readable."

The camera is preferably a charge couple device (CCD) camera. It is a black and white television camera with a solid state image center. However, any detection means capable of capturing the image is envisioned by the present disclosure.

Appln. No.: 09/689,017

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Moore discloses the following in column 11, line 63 - column 12, line 5:

"Once the print cycle begins, a CCD camera 28 mounted downstream from the printer in the marking process maintains a continuous validation that an appropriate indicia symbol is being printed onto the product. If the printed symbol is different from that provided by the marker CPU 27, an error signal is activated to alert the operator. At the conclusion of the marking cycle, the printer CPU uploads a print count to the host. The postal service or the vendor can conduct electronic audits of all host computers at any time."

Baker, et al. discloses the following in column 2, lines 6-13:

"In still another feature of the present invention, a barcode evaluation method for mail is provided which includes feeding an ail piece to an imaging device (sic) for evaluation and generating an image of a barcode on the mail piece. A processor is used to evalate (sic) the image and identify a barcode defect. A defect state is determined. The evaluation results are printed with an image of the barcode and a marker indicating the determined defect state."

Neither Moore nor Baker, taken separately or together, discloses or anticipates step b of claim 1, namely, detecting the changes in the error compensation marks in order to compensate for the defect of the symbology region to ensure that the symbology region is being interpreted correctly. Applicant detects the defect of error compensation marks 40, 50, 60 and 70 which are illustrated in Applicant's Fig. 1 to insure that the symbology region is being interpreted correctly.

Regarding claim 3, Moore does not disclose or anticipate a plurality of timing marks 62, 64, 72, and 74 which is illustrated in Applicant's Fig. 4 for identifying the defect of the OCT character region caused by irregularities in transport of the mailpiece through the indicium printing device. In column 11, line 63 to column 12, line 5, Moore uses an error signal to alert the operator. Moore's error signal does not identify defects

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of the OCT character region caused by irregularities in transport of the mailpiece through the indicium printing device.

Regarding claim 4, Moore discloses the following in column 14, line 64 through column 15, line 9:

"When the host computer 14 contacts the marker CPU 27 at the printer location, the first step is to establish a coded communication. Once the protocol for the coded communication is set, the printer location enigma card continually monitors either every print or some block of marks created and imprinted at the printer location. The printer location enigma card tracks the number of marks against the allotment from the host computer 14. When the enigma card detects that the allocation of marks for the specified period of time has been exhausted by the printer, then the printer location enigma card immediately prevents additional marking. The printer can no longer operate without authorization from the host computer enigma card to the printer location enigma card."

The Examiner regards the foregoing as rendering claim 4 unpatentable. The foregoing tracks the number of marks against the allotment from the host computer; it does not disclose or anticipate irregularities in the transport of a mailpiece that result from a mismatch between the transport velocity for transporting the mailpiece and timing signals of the printing device.

The Examiner is of the opinion that column 21 lines 1-11, which read as follows, make claim 5 unpatentable:

"One preferred procedure for applying the indicia marks to the mailpieces uses a typical ink jet printer which directs a spray of a chemical formulation onto the modules. The chemical formulation can be an ink or similar composition that can be applied in a predetermined pattern to the modules or, alternately, to the packaged goods. As applied, it is formed into a specific pattern representing either encoded data or raw data. The pattern can be in accordance with the UPC symbols or the like."

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The foregoing does not disclose or anticipate irregularities that are the result of a misalignment of the transport mechanism with the print head, causing the inkjet nozzle to appear skewed relative to a transport direction of the transport mechanism.

The Examiner is of the opinion that column 13, lines 11-19, which read as follows, make claim 6 unpatentable:

"Following the placement of the mark by the marker 20, a verification of the imprinted mark is conducted by the camera 29 which compares the mark as imprinted with the mark directed by the printer PC. As a result of this marking, the mailpieces can be scanned by a field reader 18 to determine the presence of authentic marks. Once the reader has captured the data from the scanned mark, communication is established by the reader with the host computer 14 and the control computer 12."

The foregoing section of Moore does not disclose or anticipate anything about irregularities that are the result of an uneven surface section of the mailpiece.

Regarding claims 8 and 9, Moore does not disclose or anticipate an inkjet printer that has at least one row of inkjet nozzle. to apply ink droplets onto the mailpiece, wherein the irregularities in the indicium producing device are related to ink droplets applied by the inkjet nozzles, or are related to blockages of one or more inkjet nozzles.

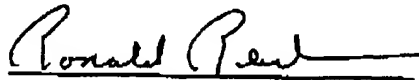
Regarding claim 10, neither Moore nor Baker, et al., taken separately or together, discloses or anticipates step (d) of claim 10, namely, having a fourth mechanism, responsive to the signal, for compensating for the defect in the symbology, according to the detected changes in the error compensation marks.

In view of the above, claims 1-15 are patentable. If the Examiner has any

Appln. No.: 09/689,017  
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questions, would the Examiner please telephone the undersigned at the telephone number noted below.

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